



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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OUR WORK.

House of Education.—Our readers will congratulate us on the fact that the House of Education has moved into a large and beautiful house (see Canon Rawnsley's notice of Scale Howe), which will not only enable us to have all our students under one roof, but also to do what has long been the desire of our heart, to give a single term's training to girls (not proposing to teach) who have left school and cannot spare time for a year's course, and also to receive mothers as students for a fortnight or three weeks to get insight into our methods and principles. Apply to Secretary, House of Education.

House of Education Natural History Club.—Notes by M. L. Hodgson. I would again direct your attention to the trees; you will be surprised to find how much there is that you can do during the winter in this subject if you will only begin to study the matter, both out of doors and in. Choose a common tree to start with, get one or two small typical twigs, and mount each on a card; search under the tree for one or two leaves, and you have all you want for a whole week's work. Press the leaf until it is quite dry, and then mount it on a card in the same way as the twig; the same card will do if you like it better. The next thing is, to get out paint boxes and brushes, stand the mounted twig up in front of you, and carefully copy it in brush-work. It is not of the slightest consequence whether you can draw or not; do it as well as you can anyway, for the number of times you look at the twig in order to copy it will impress its form on your memory as nothing else could do. During your daily walks look out for all the trees you can find of the same kind, until you can tell, even at a distance, the growth and contour of your tree. The ringed surface of the cut end of your twig will call your attention to the way it grows, and the question children so frequently ask will very likely occur to you—"why is it ringed?" A profitable hour can be spent in finding this out, and the manner of growth of the whole tree be considered and discussed. While those who are fortunate enough to possess a microscope can without much difficulty see for themselves the various vessels and cells described in Oliver's Botany (Blakie's Science Series, 2.-). Some thin cuttings off a match will show the pitted vessels very well, and the others may be found after a little experience in cutting; they should be soaked in a little alcohol, and put under the microscope in water or spirit. The leaf should be treated in a similar manner, first paint it, and then study leaves and their uses. The chapters on leaves in Professor Geddes' *Modern Botany* are very good, and most interesting. To some people it is a new thought that the buds and catkins for next spring are to be found on the trees now. If they are looked

for they will be seen quite early in the autumn or end of summer, and they remain dormant all the winter with their tiny embryo leaves and flowers, wrapped up in their blankets and waterproofs. The fruits of plants, &c., can be found in abundance. Then, where there are lanes, it is possible during open weather to hunt for snail-shells; mossy banks under hedges are by far the best hunting grounds, and empty shells in good preservation are to be discovered without much difficulty. Ponds are teeming with life on the mild sunny days before the frost sets in, and a few good handfuls of duckweed will give you plenty to do. *Water-fleas*, *Cyclops*, *Hydras*, and *Rotifers*, are all visible to the naked eye. A bottle of pond water and duckweed will be a good place in which to look for and to keep them in when found; if kept in a warm place the water soon becomes lively, and should it not contain what you wish to study, try again until you are successful; even if you do not get exactly what you want, you will be sure to find something interesting.

The birds in the winter are a source of much pleasure and interest, they soon learn their way to your doors and windows, if you will regularly put suitable food out for them. Strings of nuts, cracked and threaded, are sure to attract all kinds of tits, they are also very fond of a cocoanut with the ends sawn off; a little seed attracts the finches, and bread finds many visitors. Do not be satisfied with merely looking at the birds, a little time should be spent in reading about their habits, nests and eggs. In this way you will find a great deal to occupy you in the winter months, and if you enter a short account of each thing studied in your nature note-book, along with whatever pictures you are able to produce, you will find that by the time spring comes round again you have made quite satisfactory progress, and have gained much pleasure, though the things you may have been obliged to study were common, and therefore not supposed to be very interesting.

Parents' Review School.—Next term begins January 15th. It is advisable that children in the P.R.S. should join the P.N.E.U. Natural History Club.

Mothers' Educational Course.—We are beginning to reap the fruit of our *Mothers'* studies in suggestive and instructive articles for the *Parents Review*.